

CITY COUNCIL CONFERENCE MINUTES

November 12, 2009

The City Council of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma, met in the Municipal Building Conference Room at 5:30 p.m. on the 12th day of November, 2009, and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted in the Municipal Building at 201 West Gray and the Norman Public Library at 225 North Webster 48 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting.

PRESENT:

Councilmembers Atkins, Butler,
Cubberley, Dillingham, Griffith,
Mayor Rosenthal

ABSENT:

Councilmembers Ezzell, Kovach, and
Quinn

STATUS REPORT FROM CAPITOL DECISIONS ON THEIR EFFORTS TO ADDRESS FUNDING ISSUES FOR THE CITY OF NORMAN.

Mr. J.R. Reskovac, Capitol Decisions, Inc., said Congress will be in session until December 23, 2009. He said three appropriations bills have been completed with five more to be completed by the first week of December. He said two stand alone bills are to be approved, one regarding military construction and the other is the Commerce Justice State which includes the earmark for the police software upgrade for the City. He said he hoped it would be reconciled next week and possibly it was increased while in conference. He said another bill that had been signed was the Interior Appropriations Bill which provides \$157 million in direct granting authority for communities. A letter has been drafted to be signed by Senator Inhofe and Congressman Cole directly requesting some of the funds go to projects the City has been focusing on for several years, i.e., arsenic, water supply, stormwater management. He said Senator Inhofe has the authorization authority over the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and he hoped to initiate direct contact between the EPA and the City.

He said the Highway Bill is one month at a time. He said there has been talk about forward funding projects for two years instead of the six-year authorization, which will allow for some money now and create jobs pretty quickly. He said it is unknown what this could do to the transit side of the bill but if it is not rectified, Oklahoma will lose about \$400 million in contracts or half of the highway program. He said the larger issue is if they go to the \$500 billion six-year plan instead of a two-year plan, the City will lose revenue. Taxes will go up and sources of revenue will have to be explored, i.e., gas tax, use tax.

He said there are also three or four versions of a Climate Bill being circulated. Senator Stabenow from Michigan and Senator Cantwell from Washington are introducing a new Climate Bill and have reached out to the agricultural community for support.

He said there has been a call in the House this year for additional Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) Projects. There is a \$10 million authorization for old projects that have not been funded and he will be working with Senator Imhofe's Office to get certain projects authorized in 1992 and 1993 eliminated to allow newer projects to be considered. A core project will not be

considered unless it is on the list. He said there is an open project description in the Authorization Bill and that authorization does not expire. His recommendation is to work on getting the present authorization funded before the City adds more projects and there will be another authorization bill a few years from now. He said the committees are working on the Highway Bill and the WRDA Bill and any new projects will wait. There were seventeen authorizations in the state and none of them made it and Mr. Reskovac recommended waiting rather than creating false expectations. He said in June of 2008 there was a call for these projects and the process stopped, now it has happened again. He said the City needs to find some legislative authority to allow that money to flow more freely.

Mayor Rosenthal asked if the City would be required to define more carefully what the \$2 million will be to be used for. Mr. Reskovac said the City may need to do that in the future but not now. There are projects that will qualify and yearly appropriations that could be finalized. He said the Corps of Engineers are trying to cull the list but has been unsuccessful as it was politically sensitive. He said with budget constraints the way they are, there is a \$26 billion backlog.

Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager, asked if there was information about the new EPA Administrator for this part of the country. Mr. Reskovac said he will try to get some background information and forward it to the City Manager.

Mr. Reskovac asked that Councilmembers traveling to Washington, D.C., in the spring to let him know the topics they wish to discuss so he could set up meetings with the delegations.

Participants in discussion

1. Mr. J.R. Reskovac, Capitol Decisions, Inc.
2. Mr. Steve Lewis, City Manager

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor